

COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 18 November 1948

SUBJECT Strike at the Sevilla Fruit Company in Colombia

NO. OF PAGES 12

25X1A

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO

25X1X

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

1. Gustavo Salazar Garcia, Secretary General of the Colombian Ministry of Labor, made the following statements concerning the Sevilla Fruit Company strike:
- a. The Government was taken aback by the sudden strike, which was called by the laborers of the Sevilla Fruit Company in Cienega, Department of Magdalena. The strike was called in spite of assurances that labor gave the Government to the effect that it would not strike until after a Government or Labor Ministry representative had arrived on the scene and participated in the negotiations.
 - b. The Government considered a strike in the banana-producing area to be of particular importance because of the bitterness engendered by the bloody strike of 1928 in which the Government was forced to use armed troops against the strikers.
 - c. The Ministry of Labor is convinced that the leading spirit behind the strike is Pedro J. Abella, the Communist Secretary General of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC). Salazar stated that Abella had been actively organizing the strike for the last two months. The Ministry of Labor regards with alarm the close cooperation existing between the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) and the Communist Workers' Party (PCO) labor agitators in the banana-producing zone. The Ministry considers the close collaboration between Abella and Ismael Escamilla, a PCO leader and the President of the Federacion Nacional de Transportes Fluvial, Maritimo, Portuario y Aereo (FEDENAL), to be significant.
 - d. Salazar Garcia stated that the strike in the banana-producing zone was timed to add to the present state of labor unrest. He pointed out that only a truce exists at present between the Union Sindical Obrero (USO) members and the management of the Tropical Oil Company. He also stressed the great unrest among the railroad, river, and road workers.
 - e. Salazar stated that the Government has well-founded reasons for believing that instructions to incite these strikes were received from the CTAL headquarters in Mexico City. He stated categorically that the Ministry of Labor believes that Roberto Morena, Secretary General of the Federation of Brazilian Workers, advised CTC and local Communist leaders that the CTAL desires a general strike to take place in Colombia within the near future.

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Next Review Date: 2006

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2. Victor Julio Silva, President of the CTC, and Pedro J. Abella had disagreed violently over the strike. Silva objected strongly to calling a strike after having given the Government assurances that none would be called until after it had attempted to mediate. Abella and Carlos Arturo Aguirre, Secretary of Labor of the PCC, strongly attacked Silva and even accused him of not being interest in the Labor cause. They also accused Silva of being a "Yankee spy" in the CTC and of using his position to further his own obscure aims. 25X1A
25X1A This disagreement confirms previous reports concerning the serious differences that exist between Silva and Abella. It is believed this strike is part of a plan to cause labor unrest, rather than a legitimate grievance against the company.)

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 Auth: DDA-ERC
 Date: 10 MAY 1978 By: 28